

THE CLAIMS

1 1. (previously presented) A method of simultaneously steering and advancing a mining
2 machine having an advancing machine operatively connected thereto, the advancing machine
3 having a plurality of sides, comprising:

4 bracing the advancing machine between side walls of a mine opening independently of
5 the mining machine by a first set of braces fixedly mounted on the advancing machine;

6 moving the mining machine away from the advancing machine while simultaneously
7 steering the mining machine by increasing a distance between the advancing machine and the
8 mining machine by different amounts on two of the plurality of sides;

9 bracing the mining machine between the side walls independently of the advancing
10 machine by a second set of braces fixedly mounted on the mining machine;

11 releasing the advancing machine; and

12 moving the advancing machine toward the mining machine.

1 2. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said bracing includes
2 bracing the advancing machine and the mining machine between a roof and a floor of said
3 mine opening.

1 3. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said bracing includes bracing the
2 advancing machine between walls of said mine opening.

1 4-9. (canceled)

1 10. (currently amended) An apparatus for simultaneously advancing and steering a mining
2 machine with a single set of extenders, comprising:

3 an advancing machine independent of the mining machine; and

4 two or more extenders operatively coupled between said advancing machine and the
5 mining machine oriented substantially in the direction of advancing and capable of extension
6 and retraction[[: and]]

7 ~~a brace coupled to said advancing machine and being extendable independently of said~~
8 ~~extenders to brace said advancing machine between side walls of a mine opening.~~

1 11. (canceled)

1 12. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[10]] 45, wherein said brace
2 comprises at least two hydraulic cylinders.

1 13. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said extenders
2 comprise hydraulic cylinders.

1 14. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[10]] 45, wherein said brace
2 and said extenders comprise electrical actuators.

1 15. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[10]] 45, wherein said brace is
2 extendable to brace said advancing machine between a roof and a floor of said mine opening.

1 16. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim [[10]] 45, wherein said brace is
2 extendable to brace said advancing machine between walls of said mine opening.

1 17-40. (canceled)

1 41. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the mining machine
2 further includes an extender operatively coupled to the advancing machine, and wherein said
3 bracing the advancing machine includes bracing the advancing machine independently of the
4 extender.

1 42. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4, wherein the mining machine
2 further includes an extender operatively coupled to the advancing machine, and wherein said
3 bracing the advancing machine includes bracing the advancing machine independently of the
4 extender.

1 43. (previously presented) A method according to claim 7, wherein the mining machine
2 further includes an extender operatively coupled to the advancing machine, and wherein said
3 bracing the advancing machine includes bracing the advancing machine independently of the
4 extender.

1 44. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim ~~[[10]]~~ 45, wherein the brace is
2 fixedly mounted on the advancing machine.

1 45. (new) An apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a brace coupled to said
2 advancing machine and being extendable independently of said extenders to brace said
3 advancing machine between side walls of a mine opening.